P

Dear George, 2/9/10

About 5:30 t is morning I heard the UOI item you mentioned last night, about the House assassins. Fortunately I had already struggled into my appliances and was making coffee while shaving and listening to WRC. It was still radio short but it made me think.

You mentioned asking again for the payments to consultants. I recall that you had been turned down. Not you alone. I know another reporter who did not get them and was given no response when he asked by what legal authority they were being withheld.

There is a different situation now than there was when you asked. Now the committee is asking for $2,500,000. And there will be opposition. You can get more than the consultant records and I think you should.

Let me begin with a reminincence and an apology because I'll not be able to read and correct this.

Some years ago, when I was writing a book on the Dies committee, I had some experiences that were an important part of my education.

You may have come accross FBI records that say I was fired by the committee for which I worked for leaking the confidential and to the Daily Worker. In all aspects false. I had no confidential information to leak. I was custodian of the public record. I was the editor who got it printed. My sin was with another now dead lobbying through an appropriation for the committee's continued life so it could investigate the migratory farm situation in California. FDR didn't want this and LdFollette, hardly his fathers son, didn't want it. So they, not FDR but LaFollette and some finks he had brought in to end that committee because it had become a liability for him. Too much corporate pressure.

My associate was the late Gardner "Pat" Jackson, an amiable liberal alcoholic and an effective lobbyist, which he was for John Lewis. He was a trustee of the Marshall Foundation and it had an ACLU-type project on the Dies committee. Pat had me as the investigator and I was going to do a book.

The committee tried to set me up and save for my caution would have succeeded. Well, not alone caution. That kept me from having done anything wrong.

Suddenly there were these subpoenaes. And the most defamatory releases to a receptive and unquestioning press, all false. Next another tough effort. The law Weicher cited when he said how he threw Colson out of his office was passed to get Pat Jackson and me.

Next a grand jury. That was the rough one because the appointment of the USA, a decent type named Dave Pine who you probably knew as chief federal district judge, was held up by the Texas gang to force him to seek an indictment of us. That part is a long story I'll abbreviate: I took the grand jury away from his second assistant (first also later a chief judge, Ed Curran), Ed Fihelly and forced an indictment of the Dies agent. You'll find the case as U.S. V Mayne.

Now, how could I, a brash kid, all alone save for this alcoholic friend of so many connections none of which would work for him in his hour of need, do this-save us both and I suppose for the only time get the committees agent indicted?

I go into this because I think you can do a public service and get a much more important story than you visualize by duplicating what I did. You can do it easier. You won't have to borrow money you could never pay back for years to hire three typists. Today there are xerox machines.

I took those three women and typewriters into the office of the Clerk of the House and copied all the expenditures of the Dies committee. Sure enough I found the guy who tried to entrap me on their payroll under the guise of being a witness.

(Later, when the Hollywood 10 were before the same committee, one of them, the one who turned out to be the informer but a total stranger to me, came to me for help, asking to borrow some of my records. I let him have what he wanted and never saw him or my records again. They dodn't know how to fight so they went to jail.)

I have given all the records I could still find to the University of Wisconsin. They may still include all the Dies expenditures and if they do there is a fine doctoral thesis in them. They do include extensive but incomplete clippings.

You will get a story from the consultants from those of whom I know. But you'll get a much better story fromall the expenditures, and would I love to deposit copies of them with all my other records, for the future! I would not want to look at them unless you

want help or if you can get a researcher put on it. I would help the researcher. I do believe the Post would come up with a major story.

You can get the records today because of what you did not tell me and because you can get help from Bauman and other members like him. You will also find a different staff situation that in the past. Those people have been leaking their heads off for their own reasons only not to the major media. I rather suspect your silence and pulling back after Lane's accusations (they have not stopped) makes the staff afraid of you.

I picked Donovan for you to speak to for more than one reason. I'll not go into all. One is that he impressed me more than the others I've met, who are few in number. Another is because he was present the entire morning I spent with Richard A. Sprague in October or November 1976, I think, when they were just starting. He spent much of the afternoon with me, as some others did.

When they got into trouble he was decent enough to call me up and say man if anyone ever saw the future and gave all the warnings you did. I had in fact told the arrogant, egomaniacal Sprague that there was only one way he had any chance of not failing and offered to help him with that.

Only now is the committee giving any sign of beginning to take that way. With the help of my books, for which I did not get paid untilx a few days ago despite a number of dunning letters, they still do not understand how to do it. But theyare representing to the Congress, if I understand the brief UPI item, that now they are.

What the hell kind of an investigation was it if only now they are seeking to establish the basic facts of the JFK assassination? (Nothing in th item about theirking end.)

And how, according to this item? By having analyzed the pictures, which was Richard E. Sprague, and now going into the direction of the shots. Direction, if important, also is not the beginning.

Much of the staff, which hardly understand how to establish whether or not there was one, is pissed off because of the no-conspiracy conclusion.

This gets to why I asked Policoff to call you and why I suggested that the Post consider getting Scott Malone to do a Sunday piece. Me better if he and Policoff collaborated. When I suggested Scott I had not spoken to either for some time. I did not know that he and Policoff had already worked together. Each has sources you'll never tap.

If the Post does that one it will be easier to get the expense records because there will be moreCongressional support for it.

Hoover hated me because I defeated his attempt to frame me for Dies, with whom he was close not for personal but for political reasons. I did not leak, it was not to the Daily Worker in any event. I gave galley proofs of a hearing to the late Henry Zon, who was with a labor pressservice. His partner, Henry Fleischer, can tell you how "red" Henry was. And as of today the FBI is not releasing any of those records. I've been after them for years. I'll probably sue for them before long, when Jim and I can find a moment for that.

Now, on the other story, I am still without any regular income and I do have all those xeroxes to pay for, so I've tried with the National Enquirer, which does pay. If they do not go for it I'll give it to you. It is a story that could be enough to force a real investigation but has the hazard of helping this apprentice Keystone Kops. I rather like the idea of a member again saying why spend all that money when I can read the scandal sheets and learn more.

I don't think the Post wants to but if it does it can do what the assassins comittee has not done, with the work I've already done and can still lead it to.

If you talk to Shales and think he is interested please tell him that his excellent review of Ruby and Oswald is flawed by kindness - that it is not in fact based on sworn testimony about the details.

Aside from merely being told the numbers of the sections in which the FBI has records on the critics my interest in the Ford and executive session records is for a case now at the appeals level, No. 77-1831. Jim says those things are relevant. Please ask your researche who may recall or may have made notes. Sincerely,

Dear Jim, attached letter to George Lardner 2/9/78

George is busy on the Flood story. He called me last night at about the middle of Ruby and Oswald so I missed most of the last part of that. However, I do expect CBS to start a campaign to move Ruby's body to Arlington Cemetery and have an eternal flame warm its loving, patriotic spirit.

The Post did have a stronger cover Lane's press conference. There was nothing to it. Lane's representations were false. Swearingen did not say there had been a conspiracy to kill JFK. Instead he said he was not part of the investigation of it and had no personal knowledge. Maybe he is just p'ed off, attracted by the big reward offer or just looking for the job he got.

George confirmed my hunch that the Assassins Committee staffer whose secret paper Blakey gave to the CIA is Fonzi- best investigator of them all to Lane, who says a job awaits him. That makes the Flynt million safer.

I told George that anyone could do the story of the offer by the country music singer but that it not only had no visible connection with the actual killing-there was not even a basis for conjecturing it. I offered him all the records, for any Post reporter, here or through you. I told him it was dated about 1976 or later and would be in the last couple of sections we have on King.

The reason I made the other offer is because he has not read enough of those FBI records to have his own doubts about the kind of investigation that was made if not of more. He got himself relieved after he got bleary-eyed, after having read about 50,000 pages. I don't recall if in all or of the second batch.

If you can get a copy of the assassins report please do. I think you can get it by mail by phoning Fauntroy's office and saying nothing more than can you please have two copies. They say no conspiracy. (Still too early for me to go out for the paper so this from the radio news wire. I also heard last night that UPI did have a story on 2155 on the radio wire. This comes from a reporter I've not seen in several years. He now has a talk show I'm going by phone this afternoon. He called as soon as the Lardner conversation ended. He did not keep the item.)

George has a tape of the Lane press conference. I'll get it if I don't get one from Gandolfo. I guess Lane again took credit for digging out the "missle" receipt. George remembered it from I guess Post Mortem, but he knew I'd gotten it under FOIA. So Lane is the same Lane Brain, to coin a phrase. So sick!

This is going to shape up into a real potential with two wealthy corporations involved, inextricably, both paying for his promotions and publications. We do want to collect all we can.

I did get started on the government's brief in 77-1831 last night. I'm tyoing it.

Best,